

Meeting Notes



Project Name: Whittemore Park

Client: Town of Arlington

Project Number: 1803

Meeting Date: April 9, 2018

Issue Date: April 18, 2018

Attendees: MCLA, Jenny Raitt (Arlington Director of Planning and Community Development)
Community Members

OPEN HOUSE MEETING - FIRST COMMUNITY MEETING

MCLA prepared boards of survey results, existing conditions analysis and inspiration for community members. Open house style meeting allowed for community members to interact with the design team and to converse about how the park is used now and how they would like to see it used in the future.

Participants were given 4 green dots and 4 red dots, and asked to put green dots on things they liked or agreed with and red dots on things they disliked or disagreed with. Participant comments were also recorded on sticky notes, either by MCLA or by the participants writing their own comments. Estimated 30 community members participated.

1. WELCOME TO WHITEMORE PARK



PARK LOCATION

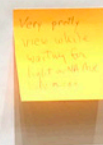
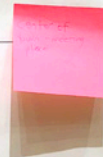


Welcome to the Whittemore Park Open House!

Whittemore Park has been called
the "Town Common" of Arlington.

Do you agree? ● ● ●

What does "Town Common" mean to you?



WELCOME
WHITEMORE PARK

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK:

Whittemore Park has been called the "Town Common" of Arlington. Do you agree?

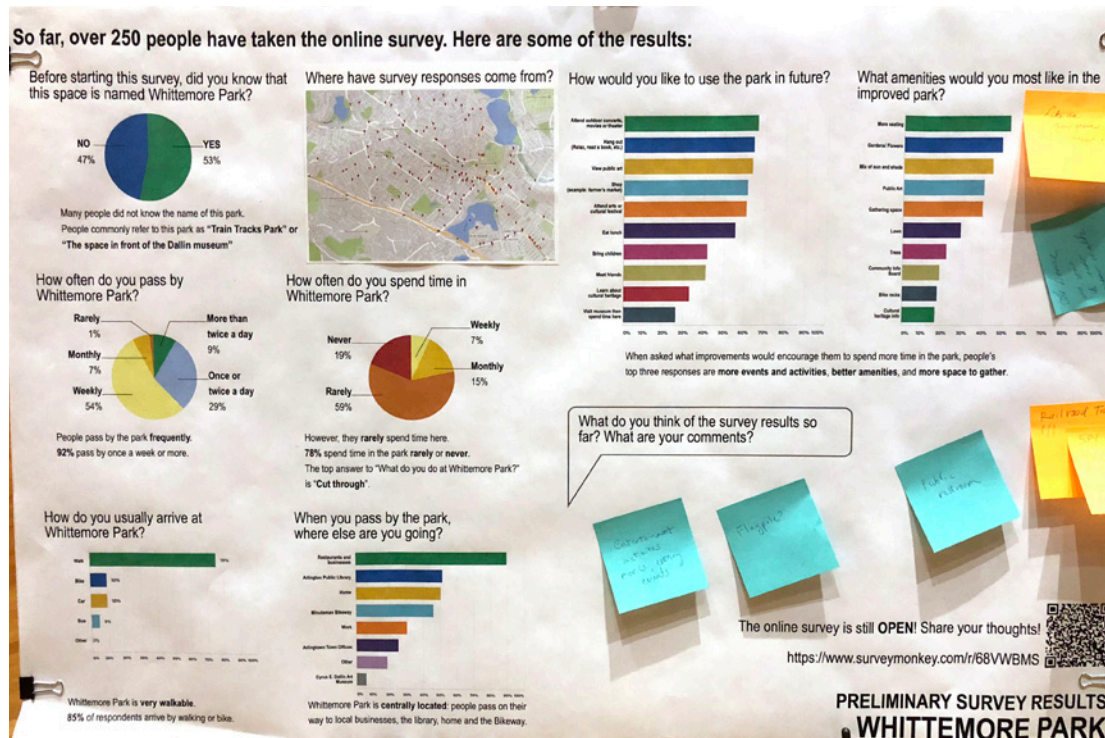
(3 green stickers)

What does "Town Common" mean to you?

"Center of town - meeting place"

"Very pretty view while waiting for light on Mass Ave, bike or car."

2. ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



MCLA created an online survey to hear from the community. As of April 6, 2018 there were over 250 responses that were compiled onto boards to discuss with the community members. A map of survey respondents approximate address was also shown.

Survey results showed the following trends:

About Whittemore:

- Many people did not know the name of Whittemore Park. (47% of survey respondents.)
- People commonly refer to the park as “Train Tracks Park” or “The space in front of the Dallin Museum.”
- People pass by the park frequently. 92% pass by once a week or more.
- However, they rarely spend time here. 78% spend time in the park rarely or never. The top answer to “What do you do at Whittemore Park” is “Cut through.”
- Whittemore Park is very walkable. 85% of respondents arrive by walking or bike.
- Whittemore Park is centrally located. People pass on their way to local businesses, the library, home, and the Bikeway.

The Future of Whittemore Park:

- Top three responses to “How would you like to use the park in future?” are “Attend outdoor concerts, movies and theater”, “Hang out”, and “View public art.”
- Top three responses to “What amenities would you most like in the improved park?” are “More seating”, “Gardens/flowers” and “Mix of sun and shade.”
- When asked what would most encourage them to spend more time in the park, the top three responses are “More events and activities,” “Better amenities,” and “More space to gather.”

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK:

What do you think of the survey results so far? What are your comments?

"Like an open green view"

"Chairs, music, BYO Chairs, Keep the train tracks. Exhibit on the tracks."

"Entertainment activities, movies, evening events."

"Chairs, poet's garden"

"Flagpole"

"Underneath the side wings of the house they haven't fixed the subbase"

"Small gathering space"

"Temporary public art is good. Static things won't bring people back over and over."

"Public restroom"

"Spy pond ice pond first. Kids play on the tracks and it's not safe."

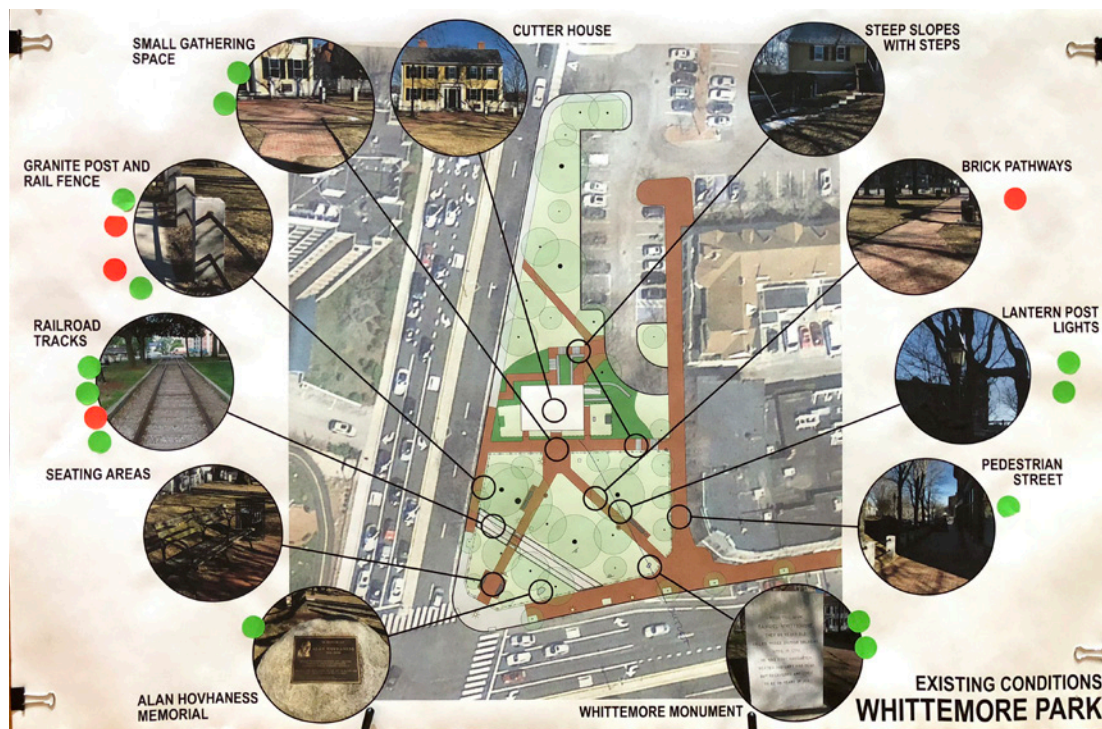
"Railroad tracks" 3x

"Festive Tree Lighting"

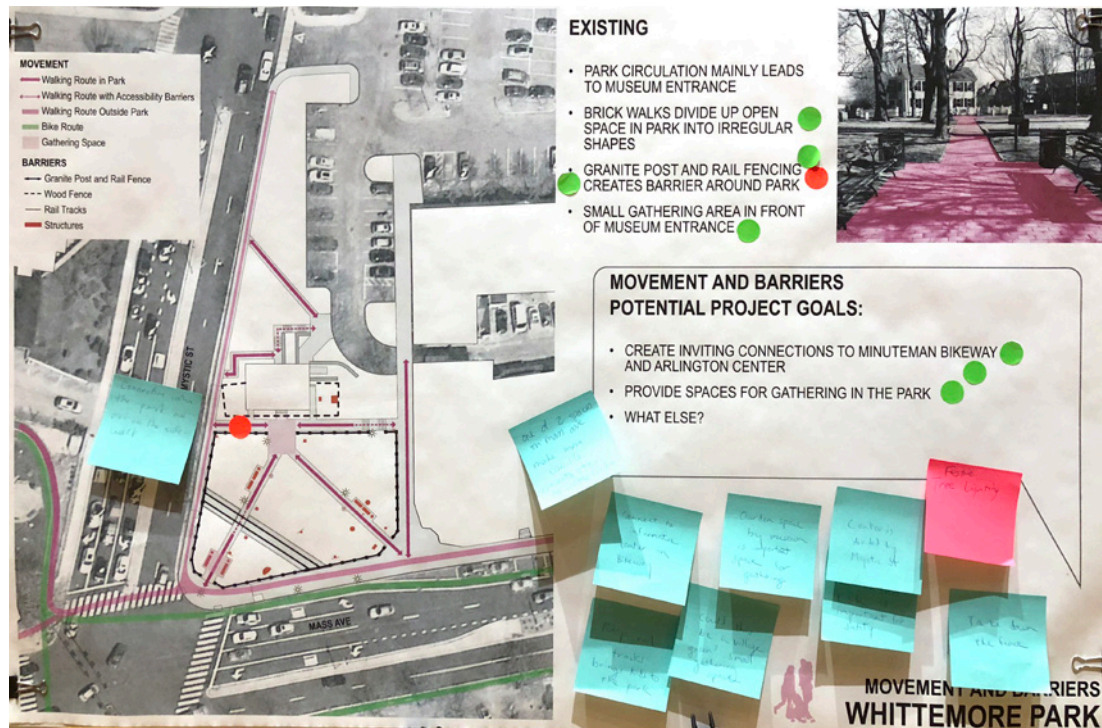
3. EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

MCLA presented four boards of existing conditions. The first board outlined the whole park and had notes and photographs depicting the different elements of the existing equipment and layout. The next three boards each took a specific look at circulation and barriers, vegetation, and accessibility / slope. On each of those boards the existing conditions were highlighted in plan and noted. With each of those existing conditions boards some broad goals were outlined.

BOARD 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS



BOARD 2: MOVEMENT AND BARRIERS



Movement and Barriers: Existing Conditions

- Park circulation mainly leads to museum entrance
- Brick walks divide up open space into irregular shapes (1 green dot)
- Granite post and rail fencing creates barrier around park (2 green dots, 1 red dot)
- Small gathering area in front of museum entrance (1 green dot)

Movement and Barriers: Potential Project Goals

- Create inviting connections to Minuteman Bikeway and Arlington Center (1 green dot)
- Provide spaces for gathering in the park (1 green dot)

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

What else?

"Connections within the park, not out on the sidewalk"

"Might be nice to acknowledge the history of Mystic Street"

"House disconnects the back of the site from the front"

"One of two spaces on Mass Ave. Make more useable - concerts etc. It's a little funky."

"Connect to information center on Bikeway."

"Keep rail tracks - brings kids to the park."

"Could this be a village green or small gathering space?"

"Garden space by museum is important space for gathering."

"Arlington Center is divided by Mystic Street."

"Take down the fence."

"Having a rail on front and side is important for safety."

"I like the irregular shapes in the park."

"Don't defer maintenance on rails on fence."

BOARD 3: VEGETATION AND TREES



Vegetation and Trees: Existing Conditions

- Mix of native and invasive trees planted in park
- Some trees are healthy and mature, and others are at the end of their life span
- Trees are densely planted

Vegetation and Trees: Potential Project Goals

- Plan for long-term health of tree canopy (4 green dots)
- Protect healthy, native trees (1 green dot)

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

What else?

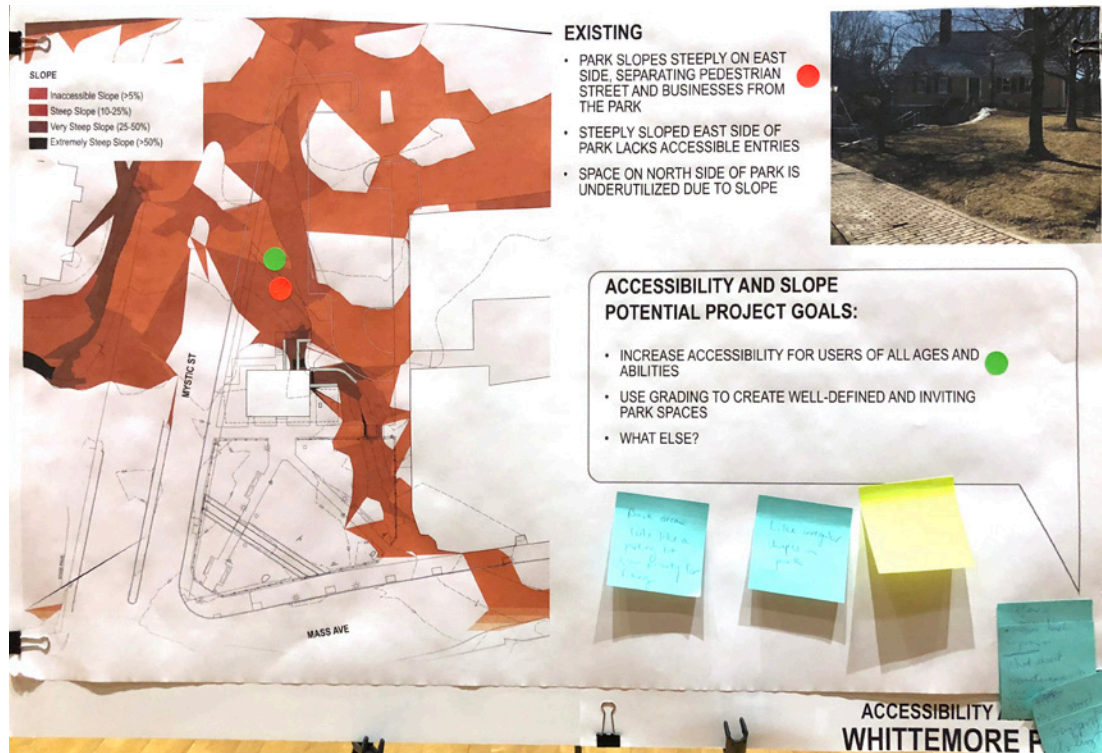
"Like the shade" (+2 green dots)

"Please thin out trees and remove unhealthy trees"

"Get rid of Tree of Heaven"

"Remove all ailanthus!"

BOARD 4: ACCESSIBILITY AND SLOPE



Accessibility and Slope: Existing Conditions

- Park slopes steeply on east side, separating pedestrian street and businesses from the park (1 red dot)
- Steeply sloped east side of park lacks accessible entries
- Space on north side of park is underutilized due to slope

Accessibility and Slope: Potential Project Goals

- Increase accessibility for users of all ages and abilities (1 green dot)
- Use grading to create well-defined and inviting park spaces

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

What else?

"Back area feels like a parking lot and is a low priority area for fixing."

"Front of the park is what people think of as the park. Back feels disconnected."

"What about maintenance in the park?"

4. HERITAGE AND CULTURE

MCLA presented a board about cultural heritage features in the park to determine which features are most valued by community members.

WHICH CULTURAL HERITAGE FEATURES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU AT WHITEMORE PARK?

SAMUEL WHITEMORE
1696-1793
• KILLED THREE BRITISH SOLDIERS AT THE AGE OF 80 ON THE SITE OF WHITEMORE PARK
• WAS SHOT AND BAYONETTED BUT SURVIVED AND LIVED TO BE 98

CYRUS DALLIN
1861-1944
• RENOWNED SCULPTOR
• ARLINGTON RESIDENT, 1900-1944
• SCULPTED "APPEAL TO THE GREAT SPIRIT" AND NORTH END PAUL REVERE STATUE

MINUTEMAN BIKEWAY
• LEXINGTON AND WEST CAMBRIDGE RAILROAD RAN ALONG THE BIKEWAY FROM 1845-1979
• BIKEWAY CURRENTLY PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT ROUTE FOR CYCLISTS

JEFFERSON CUTTER HOUSE
BUILT 1815, MOVED TO WHITEMORE PARK IN 1989
• ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLE OF FIVE-BAY FEDERAL PLAN

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE
• PAUL REVERE'S RIDE RAN APPROXIMATELY ALONG THE ROUTE OF THE MINUTEMAN TRAIL, WHICH PASSES THIS PARK

UNCLE SAM (SAMUEL WILSON)
1795-1854
• BORN IN ARLINGTON
• COMMEMORATED WITH A STATUE ACROSS THE STREET

EXISTING

- WHITEMORE PARK HAS A RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE WHICH MAY GO UNNOTICED TO PARK VISITORS
- EXISTING MONUMENTS ARE SCATTERED
- DIFFERENT CULTURAL FEATURES DO NOT RELATE TO EACH OTHER

HERITAGE AND CULTURE POTENTIAL PROJECT GOALS:

- PROMOTE STEWARDSHIP OF THE HISTORIC HERITAGE OF WHITEMORE PARK
- EXPRESS CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH PARK LANDSCAPE
- BUILD A CLEAR IDENTITY OF WHITEMORE PARK
- WHAT ELSE?

HERITAGE AND CULTURE WHITEMORE PARK

Heritage and Culture: Existing Conditions

- Whittemore Park has a rich cultural heritage which may go unnoticed to park visitors
- Existing monuments are scattered
- Different cultural features do not relate to each other

Heritage and Culture: Potential Project Goals

- Promote stewardship of the historic heritage of Whittemore Park
- Express cultural heritage through park landscape
- Build a clear identity of Whittemore Park

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

What else?

"Railroad tracks" (5 green dots, 3 red dots)

"Plaque honoring Alan Hovhaness" (1 red dot)

"Tracks nice by can limit activity, dangerous for young and elderly. Way to incorporate safely?"

"I don't care as long as people have a good time."

"Keep Whittemore sign"

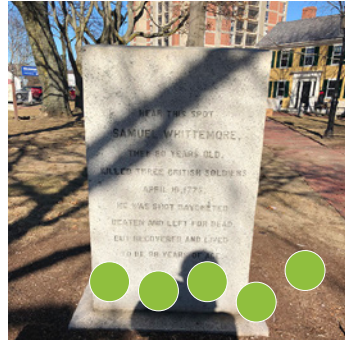
Most green stickers:



Samuel Whittemore (4)



Cyrus Dallin (5)



Whittemore Monument (5)

Most red stickers:



Uncle Sam (5)



Minuteman Bikeway (3)

5. THE FUTURE OF WHITEMORE PARK: INSPIRATION BOARDS

MCLA presented three boards with photos for inspiration, showing community members three potential landscape types that could be the inspiration for the park: Public Plaza, Town Green, or Garden.

BOARD 1: PUBLIC PLAZA



Public Plaza Elements

- Open paved area (4 red dots)
- Seating: benches and tables (2 green dots)
- Central gathering space
- Walkways
- Connected to surroundings: businesses, bike path, etc. (1 green dot)
- Space for events
- Ordered tree planting (1 green dot)

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

What do you like or dislike about these images?

"[Stonedust is] a nice soft alternative to paving, like grass."

"Don't like backless benches."

"Picnic tables could be nice - not too many."

"Picnic tables yes"

"You are the experts, you decide, tell s what it should be otherwise what are we paying

you for?"

"It would be great to expand - creatively - on current white lights on trees. Lighting could be a beacon in the winter!"

BOARD 2: GARDEN



Garden Elements

- Oasis: separated from surroundings (2 red dots)
- Space divided into smaller "rooms" (1 green dot)
- Lush planting (1 green dot)
- Seasonal interest (2 green dots)
- Shrubs and flowers

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

What do you like or dislike about these images?

"Love this [garden image]! Would like plantings that sustain bird life and butterflies!"

"Space is too small to achieve type of garden shown."

"Garden against Mass Ave with plaza by museum for performance"

"There is a walled 'oasis' across the street - don't need another one!"

"Lush trees"

"Low plantings for police visibility"

"Like garden in concept but hard to maintain"

"Post plans online for comment."

BOARD 3: TOWN GREEN



Town Green Elements

- Open lawn (3 green dots)
- Clarified open space
- Central gathering space (1 green dot)
- Tree planting on edges (1 green dot)
- Space for events (3 green dots, 1 red dot)

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

What do you like or dislike about these images?

"Sell chairs for public art fundraising. Small band music."

"Inviting"

"More green is nice to rest your eyes. Near parking, too much paving."

"Good place for summer concerts - not in a residential area, no sound concerns."

"Look at Winchester Town Green as precedent"

"Grass is good!"

"These precedent images are way bigger than Whittemore"

"The space is too small for lawns"

"Mix of sun and shade is good"

"Booths for artists on town day"

"Random tree spacing" (1 green dot)

Most green stickers:

"Open lawn" (3)

"Space for events" (3)

"Seasonal interest" (2)

"Seating: Benches and Tables" (2)

Most red stickers:

"Open paved area" (4)

"Oasis: separated from surroundings" (2)